



Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard (L) is hugged by winger Arjen Robben after the former scored a direct free-kick in their Premiership encounter against Sheffield United in Sheffield on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP

Red and Black with rage

INTERNET, undated

Milan were furious with the rejection of their CONI appeal, while Fiorentina concede they could continue their legal battle.

Last evening the Calciopoli penalties were substantially reduced -- eight points shaved off the handicaps for Juventus and Lazio -- but the Rossoneri were the only ones to remain untouched.

They showed their anger in a terse statement released a few minutes after the announcement.

"The decision of the CONI Arbitration does not deserve any comment from A.C. Milan."

Fiorentina were also irritated by the outcome, as their 19-point penalty was cut by just four points.

"Fiorentina and Juve were the teams most penalised by the original trials, now we have to see what exactly happened in this appeal, but I can say we certainly deserved a bigger discount," said ex-Viola legend Giancarlo Antognoni.

The Viola are the only side likely to pursue their legal battle through the TAR civil courts.

"It doesn't seem as if four points are a lot in the grand scheme of things. Will we go to the TAR? I don't know, you'd have to ask Diego Della Valle."

Lazio are the biggest beneficiaries of the leniency, they have seen the penalty reduced from 11 points to just three -- originally they had been relegated to Serie B.

Midfielders propel Chelsea

AGENCIES, Undated

Chelsea warmed up for next week's Champions League showdown against Barcelona with a fifth straight win after defeating struggling Sheffield United 2-0 at Bramall Lane here on Saturday.

Frank Lampard's fifth Premiership goal of the season and Michael Ballack's third since moving to the club pre-season proved enough for the defending champions to sink a spirited United side who missed a penalty when the game was goalless.

Danny Webber saw his tame spot-kick saved by Chelsea's third-choice goalkeeper Henrique Hilario after Didier Drogba had fouled Claude Davis.

Victory saw the Londoners return to first-place although they will be back in second if Manchester United win away to Bolton later Saturday.

United went into the game having won just once in nine outings since winning promotion yet Mourinho knew victory could not be taken for granted -- especially as the Yorkshire club rested all 11 first-choice players for the midweek League Cup 4-2 defeat by Birmingham.

But the hosts' preparations for the game had been overshadowed by a fight between team-mates Davis and Ade Akinbiyi, an incident which had "shamed and embar-

rassed the club" according to manager Neil Warnock.

There was no sign of Akinbiyi, despite his goal against Birmingham, although Davis took his place at the centre of defence.

And Davis put his off-field problems behind him as he won his side a 17th minute penalty after Drogba was adjudged by referee Martin Atkinson to foul the tall Jamaican defender.

It presented United with a glorious chance to take a surprise lead but Hilario, on his way to a third clean sheet in four appearances, came to Chelsea's rescue by keeping out Webber's poorly struck spot kick.

After resting several key players for the 2-0 League Cup win at Blackburn in midweek, Jose Mourinho wheeled out his big guns as he targeted an eighth league victory in 10 starts.

However, England full-back Ashley Cole and Ukraine striker Andriy Shevchenko, who had played in all his side's previous league games, were both absent as Mourinho kept half an eye on Tuesday's Champions League game in Spain.

Chelsea arrived at Bramall Lane seeking a sixth straight away win in all competitions, with their last slip-up back in August when they lost at Middlesbrough.

But Mourinho's side struggled for long periods. It was not until the closing stages of the first half that they started to show their class,

United fortunate when Chris Armstrong went close to putting past his own goalkeeper while attempting to clear Ballack's 36th minute cross.

United's Paddy Kenny had little to do but the Republic of Ireland keeper showed his very best -- and worst -- form in the closing minutes of the half.

He produced an outstanding finger-tip save to keep out Lampard's powerful close range header in the 42nd minute.

But just 60 seconds later Lampard left Kenny red-faced with a 30-yard free-kick, awarded after Mikele Leigertwood had fouled the England midfielder, which broke the deadlock. Although there was plenty of swerve on the shot, Kenny should have done much better.

Chelsea did not look back.

They doubled their lead in the 49th minute when Ballack, who had an excellent game, outjumped United substitute Nick Montgomery to head Lampard's cross into the net to cap a fine move involving Dutch striker Arjen Robben.

Robben might have scored himself in the 54th minute but was denied by Kenny.

Gillespie tried to bring the home side back into it with a fizzing effort which flashed inches over the bar.

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Juve usher in new era

INTERNET, undated

The Calciopoli discounts have put Juventus back in the promotion race and President Giovanni Cobolli Gigli sees this as the start of a new era for the club.

"I have always said I expected a substantial discount, even if I never quantified the number of points I envisaged. I think that Juve can consider themselves relatively satisfied with the extra eight points, seeing as rumours over the past few days had suggested something less," noted Cobolli Gigli.

In the summer the trial demoted Juventus to Serie B with a 30-point penalty. It was reduced to 17 on appeal and has now been cut to just nine in CONI Arbitration, so the Bianconeri are propelled up the table and back into the race for automatic promotion. "Today we end a chapter in Juve's history and from tomorrow will begin a new adventure. Our objective has always remained the same, though -- to be in Serie A next season."

The Turin giants, who are still unbeaten with a draw and six consecutive victories, are now level with Zdenek Zeman's Lecce on 10 points.

They're eight adrift of leaders Genoa, but still have a game in hand to be played against Brescia on Wednesday night.

Didier Deschamps' men were scheduled to take on Frosinone last night.

Further leniency for match-fixers

Football

AFP, Rome

Juventus, Lazio and Fiorentina had their match-fixing penalties cut on Friday by the Arbitration Court of the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI).

But AC Milan failed in their bid to have their eight-point penalty from the start of the season reduced.

All four sides had already seen their original penalties greatly reduced and Lazio will be breathing the biggest sigh of relief having had theirs slashed from 11 points to just three -- originally they had been relegated to Serie B.

Juventus, relegated to Serie B and originally docked 30 points, saw their penalty cut from 17 to nine points while Fiorentina's Serie A deficit was slightly reduced from 19 to 15 points.

Reggina, the only other club involved in the match-fixing scandal, is still awaiting a decision on its appeal.

Juventus welcomed the ruling saying in a statement: "It recognises at least in part the enormous effort and spirit of sacrifice shown by the club in renewing its internal structure and promoting the values of the sport to the benefit of the whole of the national game."

Lazio president Claudio Lotito, giving his reaction, said: "It's not a total victory because I point out yet again we haven't seen all the light

shone on the truth. But I accept the court's ruling in good faith."

CONI's Arbitration Court is the highest level of the sports justice system in Italy.

The Gazzetta dello Sport had claimed this week that the rulings would be held over until Monday due to concerns that the verdicts could have incited crowd trouble during weekend matches.

The sports authorities were said to be particularly concerned about the safety of fans at Saturday's Milan derby.

The match-fixing scandal began

in May after newspapers published transcripts of intercepted telephone conversations between the then Juventus general manager, Luciano Moggi, telling the head of Italy's referees' association which officials to appoint to specific Juventus games.

Moggi was banned from any involvement in sport for five years for using his considerable power and influence at Italy's most successful club to assert control of the pool of referees and high-ranking FIGC officials.

REVISED SERIE A TABLE

TEAMS	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Inter Milan	8	5	3	0	16	9	18
Palermo	8	6	0	2	18	13	18
Roma	8	4	2	2	13	6	14
Udinese	8	3	4	1	10	5	13
Atalanta	8	3	4	1	13	10	13
Siena	8	3	4	1	9	7	12
Livorno	8	3	3	2	7	8	12
Empoli	8	2	4	2	9	8	10
Sampdoria	8	2	4	2	14	13	10
Messina	8	2	3	3	10	11	9
Catania	8	2	3	3	11	14	9
AC Milan	8	4	3	1	7	4	7
Lazio	8	3	1	4	9	9	7
Cagliari	8	0	6	2	7	9	6
Torino	8	1	3	4	4	11	6
Ascoli	8	0	4	4	5	11	4
Parma	8	1	1	6	6	17	4
Chievo	8	0	2	6	6	12	2
Fiorentina	8	5	0	3	12	6	0
Reggina	8	3	2	3	11	14	-4

Campbell slams McClaren

Football

INTERNET, undated

Sol Campbell believes Steve McClaren is lacking in respect and class -- and has called for the England coach to give a recall to goalkeeper David James.

McClaren has been on the road this week to meet his England players and listen to their feedback on the defeat in Croatia.

The former Middlesbrough boss has held a number of different meetings around the country with players and members of his coaching staff.

England were beaten 2-0 in Croatia last month in a Euro 2008 qualifier and could only draw 0-0 at home to Macedonia in their previous game.

And Campbell, who insists he has rediscovered his love of the

game under Harry Redknapp at Portsmouth, was not impressed by his treatment from McClaren.

The 32-year-old told The Independent: "New management are looking in a different direction and I can understand that -- but through respect and class how I was told was not the best."

The former Arsenal defender, who won 69 caps, only discovered he would not be part of McClaren's plans for his first squad to face Greece in August when he picked up a message on his answerphone.

The England boss has always insisted he does not want to lose contact with his players between international fixtures.

And Campbell insists he has not yet had a conversation with McClaren to clarify why an England career which lasted 10 years has been ended.

He continued: "Ten years of playing football, putting your body

on the line and playing amazing games for your country -- qualifying and playing around the world to make sure the country moves in the right direction -- and the least he could have done was speak to me properly."

"I was told I wouldn't be in the squad -- but just speak to me, have a proper conversation."

"It's the least I deserve. I speak the truth and maybe that scared him."

McClaren was keen to canvas opinion from his senior players and boost their morale this week after the disappointing results sparked heavy criticism.

Campbell believes players aged over 30 -- a group which also includes fellow international discards David Beckham and David James -- have plenty to offer their country.

He continued: "There are loads

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Klinsi admits US interest

Football

REUTERS, New York

Juergen Klinsmann says he is open to coaching the U.S. national soccer team.

"Absolutely I'm interested," Klinsmann told Saturday's New York Times. "I kind of needed some time to reflect after the World Cup."

"I've been in touch with Sunil (Gulati, president of the United States Soccer Federation) and had several conversations, all very positive."

"Right now, I'm trying to do my homework, talking to people to find out more about how things work in

the U.S."

Klinsmann, the former Germany striker who coached his country to the World Cup semi-finals this summer, currently lives in California and his belief to be the top candidate in the USSF's worldwide search for a replacement for long time coach Bruce Arena, who stepped down in July after eight years in charge.

According to the Times, the USSF has discussed the vacancy with some of soccer's biggest names, including former England boss Sven-Goran Eriksson, Luiz Felipe Scolari, Guus Hiddink and Gerard Houllier.

Two Major League Soccer coaches are also believed to be

under consideration, Canada's Frank Yallop, who coaches the Los Angeles Galaxy and Peter Nowak of D.C. United.

Following Germany's emotional run to the last four on home soil, a drained Klinsmann had denied any interest in the American job despite the fact he now lives in the U.S. and seemed a perfect fit.

"I simply wanted a break for family reasons," he said. "I told everyone that I would not be able to go back straight into work. I needed to settle back into a normal life, taking my kids to school every day."

"I had said that for the next half year I would not consider any new jobs."



BACK ON TRACK: Werder Bremen striker Miroslav Klose gestures after scoring against Mainz during their Bundesliga clash in Mainz on Friday. PHOTO: AFP

Werder wreak havoc

INTERNET, undated



Werder Bremen emphasised their title credentials with a demolition of struggling Mainz at the Bruchweg Stadium.

Three goals in the space of eight first-half minutes ended the game as a contest inside half an hour, but there was more to come in the second half from a rampant Werder side.

Captain Frank Baumann and Per Mertesacker were both given the green light to return to action having both recovered from niggling injuries and that meant that coach Thomas Schaaf was able to put out the same eleven which over turned Bayern Munich last weekend.

German international Miroslav Klose opened the scoring in the 14th minute before Aaron Hunt and Klose again piled on the misery for Mainz.

Mimoun Azzaouagh got one back for the hosts in the 74th minute, but that only seemed to provoke Werder, who came back with further goals from Hunt, Naldo and Diego in the final quarter of an hour.

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Werder were gifted their opener by a defensive lapse as Klose was allowed to latch on to Aaron Hunt's through ball on the edge of the area.

He shook off the attentions of two defenders to round the goalkeeper and score in all too easy a fashion. It was the Golden Boot winner's first goal for 795 minutes and provided a welcome relief.

"It was about time I scored," Klose said. "But it was important that we sent out another signal after the Bayern match."

Mainz were still reeling from that when Werder struck again.

Hunt doubled the lead in the 20th minute when Klose broke the offside trap to go one on one with Dimo Wache before selflessly squaring the ball to give his strike partner an easy finish.

Barely a minute later and Mainz were again exposed by a ball over the top. Hunt broke down the left before picking out Klose who side-footed home from close range.

Mainz had hopes of an improbable comeback in the 74th minute when Azzaouagh's free-kick wrong-



Argentina legend Diego Maradona gestures as he listens to a question during a press conference in San Salvador, before a match with ex-Salvadoran selection members on Friday. Maradona criticized the US decision of building a wall in the border with Mexico, and called it a "shame". He said Mexican President Vicente Fox "should defend Mexicans, that are being killed like flies" for trying to cross illegally to the US. PHOTO: AFP